

Agriculture Specialist

U.S. Customs and Border Protection



Protecting Our Heartland

The mission of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) requires attracting men and women of good character, integrity and high motivation. Serving our country as an Agriculture Specialist means combining expertise in the natural sciences with the discipline of working in a fast paced law enforcement environment. Your expertise will help curtail the spread of harmful pests and plant and animal diseases, whether intentional or unintentional, to American farms and food supplies. Not everyone can do this job. Our team of highly trained professionals enjoys one of the highest reputations in federal law enforcement.

A Day on the Job

Agriculture Specialists use their scientific education and expertise to protect American agriculture and the food supply by preventing the introduction of harmful pests, plant and animal diseases and biological threats. You will also have the authority to seize prohibited or contaminated items which could cause great harm. Your training will allow you to make a difference in both the daily lives and the future of the American people while playing a critical role in the Department of Homeland Security. Your mission begins proactively as you act on tips, check databases, interact with other agencies and use your analytical skills to complete work in the lab.



With a degree in botany, entomology, biology or plant pathology, you will be able to recognize questionable and dangerous agricultural commodities, flag them for inspection and oversee their testing or destruction. You will educate travelers about why certain agricultural commodities and meat products are seized. This is a job of details – but they are important details to ensuring the safety of our nation.

Agriculture Specialists perform their mission at more than 300 ports of entry located at airports, seaports and land borders throughout the United States and along the Canadian and Mexican borders.

Activities include:

- Providing front line leadership in CBP's critical anti-bioterrorism/agro-terrorism mission
- Protecting American agriculture and the food supply by preventing the introduction of harmful insects, pests, plant and animal diseases
- Performing an important intelligence mission in conjunction with other agencies
- Performing an analysis mission that includes lab work, microscope use, plus document and Internet research
- Using technology tools, like x-ray machines, as well as traditional methods, such as K-9 teams
- Working side-by-side with law enforcement officers
- Having the authority to issue penalties and fines, to seize prohibited or contaminated items and to oversee their testing or destruction



Top Photo: Specialist inspecting wood packing material for presence of agricultural pests on international cargo. Second from top Photo: Specialists conducting an intensive examination of regulated cut flowers and greenery offered for commercial importation at a land border port of entry. Bottom Photo: Specialist identifying foreign pest intercepted from prohibited agricultural products.



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Border Protection**

Put Your Qualifications to Work to Protect American Agriculture

You must meet these minimum qualifications to successfully maintain consideration for entry level employment:

- U.S. Citizen – with residency requirement
- Earned a bachelor's or higher degree with a major field of study in biological sciences (including botany, entomology and plant pathology), agriculture, natural resource management, chemistry or a closely related field
- Possess a valid driver's license at the time of appointment
- Computer literate (Word, Excel, Access) in order to be able to use the job-specific databases
- Fit enough to undertake some duties that can be physical – inspecting cargos, climbing ladders
- Willing to wear a uniform and perform overtime and shift work

Note: Based on your education and/or experience, you may qualify for a higher grade.

The hiring process includes successful completion of a background investigation, drug test and possible medical examination.

A Rewarding Career Protecting America's Agriculture Heartland

Generous benefits and pay include the following:

- Non-competitive promotion potential to GS-11
- Federal health insurance, retirement and 401(k) (Thrift Savings Plan)
- Life insurance – Long term care insurance – Extensive leave days

U.S. Customs and Border Protection is an Equal Opportunity Employer



Top Photo: Specialists analyze a day's worth of agricultural commodities seized during intensive inspection. Second from top Photo: Specialist examines prohibited quarantine material for the presence of injurious diseases at a maritime port of entry. Bottom Photo: Specialist explaining entry requirements for foreign origin fruits to a returning traveler at an international airport.

